MINUTES OF MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, JUNE 1, 1927.

The first meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1928 was held in New York City at the office of McKim, Mead and White, 101 Park Avenue, Friday, July 1, 1927.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Sweet[illegible],
Mr. Norton,
Mr. Delano,
Mr. Warfield,
Mr. Morris,

also Mr. C. M. Goethe, Secretary and Executive Officer.

There were also present Mr. Wm. Mitchell Kendall, of the firm of McKim, Mead and White, architects of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3d, Executive and Disbursing Officer, and Major J. C. McNeely, Assistant, Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission; and Mr. Wm. L. Stevens, Consulting Architect to the Architect of the Capitol.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. (daylight saving time).

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: The minutes of the meeting held May 27 and 28, 1927, were approved, with an amendment to paragraph 14 so as to include the name of John Russell Pope as a member of the Architectural Advisory Board to the Secretary of the Treasury.

2. ARLINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE: The Commission met in New York City for the special purpose of considering with Mr. Kendall, of the firm of McKim, Mead and White, architects of the Memorial Bridge, sketches for an underpass that had been suggested at the meeting of the Commission on May 27th, at the west side of the Lincoln Memorial, to avoid a conflict of traffic there.

Mr. Kendall submitted plans A and B, showing an underpass adjacent to the steps; Plan B indicated the underpass for Kendall, to be 30 feet in width, off from the shore drive extending from Potomac Park toward the bridge,

differing in that respect from Plan A. Mr. Kendall said a third study had been made showing a quarter tunnel at the west of the Lincoln Memorial. In submitting the sketches Mr. Kendall said 'I want it understood that I am not favoring the tunnel. I was asked to prepare sketches for the underpass. I do not think it is necessary. Mr. Greenleaf has made a study for a Plaza treatment at the approach to the bridge, which I think is a good one, and I wish you would let him show it.'

Mr. Greenleaf thereupon explained his study and said: "The situation as I understand it is this,-I fancy that everyone agrees if this stair case can be retained and at the same time provide for traffic it is a good thing to do it. I have heard no one criticize the design itself. To me it seems a very important feature of the great scheme of treatment of the whole composition. If therefore we can meet the question of traffic and do away with creating what everyone admits is an undesirable thing in itself,-do away with tunnels, ramps, underpass, etc., of course it is wise for us to do so. So I offer this scheme for what it is worth. Now I assume in the future there will be a great mass of traffic coming down from the West Gate and Potomac Parkway, to East Potomac Park and over the Memorial Bridge. Let us assume all that. Then also assume there will be heavy traffic coming down 3 streets at certain hours of the day that will want to cross the bridge. Likewise at certain hours of the day a heavy traffic coming into town will cross the bridge and go to the Triangle. Let us assume the worst conditions. Now I take it, and I will be corrected if I am wrong, a Plaza may be regarded as a legitimate traffic expedient to take care of traffic with a circulatory motion around the Plaza. In fact, it seems to me, if it is not recognized as a legitimate, up to date, expedient, Washington might as well go out of business. There are many other cities where it is

in use, not only in Washington. So, while it is a conceivably ideal traffic lay-out that all lines of traffic should run on different levels so as never to touch, such is not essential to good practice. Therefore, it is reasonable and thoroughly good practice that we consider a Plaza arrangement for taking care of traffic in Washington as is done in other cities."

Mr. Greenleaf thereupon explained his design more in particular, saying,-"Here at the Lincoln Memorial is an elongated circle, and circulatory motion contrary to the hands of a watch takes place, both of that traffic coming down to the bridge and Potomac Park and of that returning. Let us take this incoming traffic at its worst and, by the way, when is that? We are told it will be from Government employes coming across the bridge from Virginia. This would be in the morning coming to town to get people to their offices at 9 o'clock, at which hour traffic to the park is at a minimum, I may say practically nil; so that at that hour any congestion from cross-traffic could not be expected. But let us assume there will be a large traffic down river into the park and a heavy incoming traffic from the bridge meeting on the Plaza. That comprises the worst conditions,---this brings me right to the gist of the proposition I have to make. Briefly it is this: Let us look upon that (indicating on the plan) as our Plaza. Let us think of the Plaza as having two arms, one extending to 3 Street North and one extending south to the Lincoln Memorial. I show on each arm a double roadway, each 50 feet in width, with a separating parking. These roadways may be any width the most expecting traffic circles can call for. Coming across the bridge to the city colored would take the outer or right hand one of the two roadways, turning right from the bridge and going around the Lincoln Memorial and come back with the flow of travel on to the Plaza and so toward town. Those bound for West Potomac Park would keep right on down the outer roadway, left the

Ericsson Memorial. By this arrangement there would be no conflict between incoming bridge traffic and that down East Potomac Park. It is a simple expedient to avoid conflicting traffic and does away with the necessity of building a tunnel or underpass, which were the Lincoln Memorial competition and the Memorial Bridge approach, and which no one wants as a feature of design. The Plaza is enormous in size and is ample to handle a great mass of traffic. It is 750 feet from the Lincoln Memorial to the Ericsson Memorial and in that distance incoming bridge traffic can drift across the one-way road so as to be on the left side for rounding the Ericsson. I have watched traffic do this at Dupont Circle in less than 300 feet."

The Secretary stated that the arrangement Mr. Bresslerf proposes is identical with that at Scott Circle.

Continuing, Mr. Bresslerf said: "These fifty foot one-way roadways, if so much width is needed, will carry an enormous amount of traffic, and will do away with all reasons for awkward features such as a tunnel, bridge, overpass, etc., and moreover it seems to me it meets all reasonable objections in regard to traffic."

Mr. Garfield said, "If you have taken away the objections at this point you have accomplished the result we are working for."

Mr. Delano said: "It is a question whether this is the best way to solve the problem. The tunnel would be ideal."

Mr. Bresslerf replied: "As regards the tunnel there has been serious objections to it--It is not a desirable thing in itself to expect motors to drive through a tunnel; secondly, it interferes with the [illegible] of the Lincoln Memorial composition".

Mr. Delano said: "If a tunnel or underpass could be [illegible]

the time to plan for it is now".

Major McAuliffe thereupon submitted a plan prepared in his office showing a tunnel built away from the Water Gate so that it would not be necessary to disrupt it later.

The plan was inspected. Mr. Morris said: "I think it should be built so that, if later changes should by any chance be decided upon, it would not then be necessary to disrupt the composition".

Attention was then called to the arch that had been proposed between the abutment of the bridge and the first pier, for a direct connection between the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and East Potomac Park. Colonel Grant said this arch would cost $60,000--"I think the expense of the tunnel makes that impossible. It has been estimated that it would cost about $750,000 for excavations and engineering. We could leave space for it and build it later on if necessary, as suggested in New York."

Continuing, Colonel Grant said, "We are in entire agreement as to the best treatment of the underpass and tunnel; that is to say, if you are going to pass traffic through the tunnel the location indicated by Mr. Morrill is the best one. The cost, however, seems to us prohibitive at the present time. We estimated it would cost three-fourths of a million dollars to build the construction of the underpass and ramp and the wall along here (indicating). I think we are not justified in doing it because I believe it is best not to do anything on that now, so that a compromise could be made easily to indicate these constructions if necessary. Mr. Bruckner's suggestion is we think a very good solution for handling traffic there. The roadway he proposes is wide enough and the plan provides for diverting traffic. It is a feasible plan. I feel it there will be objections any way that you put

crowds of people could pass through and traffic hold a bit."

Mr. Greenleaf thereupon called attention to the traffic scheme on Massachusetts Avenue in Boston, which he said is similar to the one he proposes. There, he said, people go around 300 or 300 feet and don't mind it.

Continuing his remarks, Colonel Grant said: "Perhaps I ought to apologize for being stirred up about this as I am, but I can't help feeling to establish a vortex of traffic at the base of the Lincoln Memorial is out of keeping with its character. Perhaps as an engineer I should not express myself as to this matter, but I think we have here a real problem and I would like to see it settled in the best manner possible."

Mr. Greenleaf said: "If we must build an underpass we ought to build it now, and if not, we should build the bridge abutment solid so as to prevent something inharmonious later on".

Consideration was then given to the Water Gate provided for in the Plan of 1901 as part of the approach to the Arlington Memorial Bridge and authorized in the approved plans for the bridge. Mr. Newell said there will be a bay at the Water Gate and the steps will be curved. He called attention to the Arlington Memorial Bridge plan showing the steps. It was thought the steps were not serving any particular purpose; that they would be little used by boatmen and canoeists, because there would be no place at the Lincoln Memorial to park automobiles. It was admitted, however, there would be occasions when the steps would serve their purpose as at water pageants, and would serve as a landing place in emergency cases; also that the balance of the Potomac would be a part of the park system of the District and would be greater use for the steps. One plan included that the steps reach and form into the water, but the Commission recommended that they be placed one foot. Mr. Greenleaf said he thought the Water Gates

Government would keep the river in the locality clean.

Mr. Moore said in Detroit he had a similar purpose to construct steps at the water front and was publicly condemned for it, but that now the people would not be without them.

Mr. Delano suggested a breakwater and harbor constructed so as to make a basin for row boats and canoes.

The question of providing a low-level roadway was then considered. This would mean widening the second tier of steps and providing an archway between the abutment and the first pier of the bridge. Colonel Grant said he felt it would be a good thing to provide for this roadway, and then have an arch there in the masonry, leaving the space within hollow, and constructing it later if necessary. Mr. Kendall did not favor altering the plan of the steps but admitted it could be done if the area was regarded a necessity.

Mr. Greenleaf said he felt the Plaza scheme heretofore explained amply meets traffic requirements.

Mr. Upton called attention to the Place de la Concorde where theoretically there is no congestion, but this is as a matter of fact a bad traffic point.

Mr. Greenleaf did not regard the diagonal traffic, saying even in the Kinnala Memorial we could never expect the traffic to turn there in the event of a great city. However on the Plaza the lines of travel would be better coordinated than on the Place de la Concorde. He again explained features of his plan to take care of traffic at the Lincoln Memorial.

Mr. Delano said, "There must be some solution of this problem and that solution will be a good one. In my opinion a lower road, which will not spoil the composition, can be provided for in the design of the steps and provision

made for an arch in the abutment so that in the future ramp's road can be more easily installed if it becomes necessary. We cannot foresee future needs, but so far as we can we should provide for them. I would not advocate this if I felt it was in any way going to spoil the bigness or dignity of the composition. I do not believe it will, and in addition it will give a reason for what might otherwise be considered a useless flight of steps, especially if the breakwater and anchor which I have suggested is constructed so as to make a basin for row boats and canoes."

Mr. Morris called attention to the desirability of the view of the steps from the river. It was shown that the upper half of the Lincoln Memorial would be seen at the foot of the steps looking up at the Lincoln Memorial. Mr. Delano said in reply to Mr. Greenleaf's objection that the top of the stairway would, from certain viewpoints, intercept the view, that this would be similar to the Propylaea, the monumental gateway to the Acropolis at Athens, with the Parthenon rising above it.

Mr. Parsons thought it was a pardonable to diverge a line of traffic a great distance. Mr. Morris thought it was better than a "stop and go system", such as is now in use in many places.

Mr. Moore said: "There is one thing we have not taken into consideration and that is the roads of the mall and Potomac Park below 7 street, they also will carry a great deal of traffic and not necessarily cause congestion at the Lincoln Memorial". Mr. Parsons said it was like the area of Triangle in Washington, excepting that there have roads lead to all parts of the city.

Colonel Grant said we are broadening it would be possible to separate ordinary traffic roads from park roads. "The bridge will handle a great deal of traffic not park traffic. My impression is that the steps will be used

and slippery. If we could do away with the steps we could have the park road on the lower level leading through the arch to East Potomac Park. On the other side of the river on Columbia Island the architects have provided just such an arrangement. We have gotten to the point where we want to pour concrete here at the Lincoln Memorial approach abutment and now is the time to decide whether we are going to have the arch or not."

Mr. Delano said he thought it would be a good thing to make provision for such an arch and build it later if necessary.

Mr. Greenleaf said: "Three years ago these plans were brought before the Commission of Fine Arts and there was a little comment brought in providing for a low-level road along the river front at the memorial bridge approach. I asked Colonel Grant's predecessor the purpose of it and he said it was planned to construct an arch in the bridge abutment primarily to save in concrete construction! Since then that plan has cropped up three or four times. Now it seems to me if we are going to have an arch we ought to have a plan for the underpass roadway. If we are not going to have the underpass there should absolutely be no arch."

Thereupon the width of the space was measured and it was shown that a roadway 50 feet in width could be built if it would be necessary to construct it, but that it would be necessary to move the steps further out into the river. Mr. Greenleaf thereupon again called attention to the search he made and said he felt certain it is ample to meet traffic requirements upon the bridge plaza. "Then we have the plan presented for a tunnel", he said, "and now this suggestion for an arch and low level road, certainly we don't want both.

Mr. Morris felt if both tunnel and arch are indicated the tendency would be to take the least costly and build the arch. He was of the opinion that the

wisdom of providing for a future arch might be considered.

Mr. Delano said: "I would keep Mr. Kendall's scheme; put in a place for the archway, and raise the platform of the Water Gate."

The Commission then adjourned for luncheon, after which the consideration of this subject was resumed. Mr. Moore said: "Then you might offer two alternatives for the future--either the tunnel or the arch. I do not think we can foresee what they should do in time. If the future shall demand it then we must account for what may be needed."

Mr. Greenleaf said: "If it were to be constructed tomorrow and we offered the two alternative schemes, that of the open road underpass separating the stairs and an arch in the abutment is the simpler and undoubtedly it would be adopted and the tunnel idea discarded. Now I am anxious if the scheme I have presented is better to prevent just such a result. I would like to see the matter settled."

Colonel Grant said: "By all means let us settle it now. I think you are going to settle it in the way the stairs will be built as decided upon today, because the granite once cut specifically for them cannot be used for any other arrangement. It was concluded, however, in view of the need of the steps the curve in the piers would not thereby be useless.

Mr. Morris, finding it necessary to leave the meeting, suggested that Mr. Kendall raise the steps 2 feet, provide for the possibility of an archway, build the stairs as planned, and then let the future provide for the low-level road if needed.

Colonel Grant said: "I think the Memorial Bridge is a park bridge. You are going to have through travel over the bridge. You are going to have great

deal of traffic and to have this disturbing condition around the Lincoln Memorial will be unfortunate, when it is not necessary to have it. We are building an extensive flight of stairs. There will be little use for them. People will not use them when there is no place to park automobiles. Personally I do not see anything for the steps. They might prove interesting in connection with water pageants."

Mr. Moore said Mr. Morris left a brief statement with him, giving his views as to what he thought should be done in this matter, and leave included. Mr. Delano did not alter his views as to the steps, and concurred with Mr. Morris as to the steps.

At the closing moments of the meeting it was agreed that a report should be prepared by the Commission of Fine Arts on this subject and forwarded to the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission. Mr. Mansfield said: "I would be sorry to have any change made in the principle of Mr. Kendall's plan. The insertion of this flight of steps is largely an architectural effect and very decidedly a useful arrangement. It should be judged almost entirely from the standpoint of effect. We have had a report from Mr. Greenleaf including a solution of the traffic problem without the aid of an underpass and this solution seems to be sound. I am therefore opposed to any underpass plan that has been offered, first: because such plan has damaged the single and splendid effect that is illustrated in Mr. Kendall's plan and, second, because a traffic solution seems to me of secondary consequence."

Mr. Moore requested Mr. Greenleaf to confer with Mr. Kendall regarding development of plans for the Arlington Memorial Bridge on the Virginia side of the bridge, with particular reference to the approach to the Arlington National Cemetery.

3. "GENERAL BUTLER STATUE"; MARINE CORPS: Mr. Power of Caldwell and Company, Philadelphia, submitted a model for the General Butler Statue to be erected at Marine Headquarters in Washington. The Chairman requested Mr. Bowdoin to confer with Mr. Power in behalf of the Commission (as the Commission were in the midst of the consideration of the Arlington Memorial Bridge plans).

Mr. Bowdoin inspected the statue and reported that the sculptor had carried out the suggestions regarding the design made at the meeting of the Commission on March 18, 1927, to enlarge the wreath and improve the lettering. A new model of this revised design is to be submitted to the Commission in the near future. The Commission approved Mr. Bowdoin's recommendation to accept the design.

4. UNITARIAN CHURCH: The Secretary called attention to plans that had been received from Howard L. Cheney, architect, of Chicago, for the Fourth Church of Christ Scientist to be built at Sixteenth and Fuk streets, Washington, D. C., and concerning which Mr. Cheney obtained the views of the Commission. The plans had been referred to Mr. Delano for comment.

Mr. Delano said that he had looked over the plans and that he would be glad to talk with Mr. Cheney about them. It seemed to Mr. Delano that the building did not well fit the lot, which was odd-shaped; also that the architect could improve the crowning mass of the roof.

The Commission felt that they could not be given an official report from them.

5. PLANS FOR SHIPPING GROUNDS DEVELOPMENT AT POTOMAC PARK: Mr. W. L. Fairman, Consulting Architect to the Architect of the Capitol, submitted further preliminary drawings for the proposed treatment of the grounds between the Capitol area and the development at Union Station Plaza.

The plan proposed closing North Capitol Street, between I and O streets, and a terrace along I Street, with a carage 70 feet wide for automobiles or busses. An avenue would extend directly from Union Station southwest, connecting with Pennsylvania Avenue between Second and Third streets. Street car lines would be routed to the Station accordingly. Mr. Simmons said special study will have to be made of the southwest corner of the plan, where the development comes in contact with the Tiber Creek sewer. Mr. Simmons submitted also a cross section showing the I street terrace in relation to the Capitol Grounds, and additional buildings for the "Legislative Group" that would be built as they become necessary.

The Commission were pleased with the designs and generally approved them. The importance of developing the plans so that the United Nations will be properly related to the Capitol by a parkway was emphasized. Mr. Simmons said this would be given further study, as was the question of planting trees in the plans. Colonel Kreutz suggested a restudy of the Cermeño monument as to elevation, saying he said it would then be possible to have patterings numbering as many as 150,000, the same as there were at the west front of the Capitol building on Inauguration Day.

Attention was called to the west approach to the Capitol. Colonel Kreutz said the Senate Capitol Grounds Planning Commission had suggested that the Capitol Grounds Improvement plan be considered in order to avoid cross traffic and that be part of the Legislative Group development, using Delaware Avenue. Mr. Simmons submitted a suggested study of Union Square, which proposed to preserve as many of the trees as possible in the existing area. Special attention was called to the space about the front and the Senate Carmonia. Mr. Moore said he thought it would be well to decide on the treatment of

Union Square, as the State of Pennsylvania is interested in completing the Meade Memorial Plaza, which is a part of it. Mr. Greenleaf recommended a fine treatment of formal evergreen planting for Union Square, at the head of the Mall, and the west approach to the Capitol, with an open vista from the Square. No flower beds, he said, but well selected shrubbery, such as box bushes and holly and other similar planting should be placed there, with possibly a row of elm trees along Second Street to mark the termination of the Mall tree planting plan. Mr. Moore asked Mr. Greenleaf about swamp magnolia, which he understood used to be found in Washington but was now disappeared. Mr. Greenleaf said he had seen it in the South, that it is very fragrant hardy growth. Discussion developed as to the specific treatment of the area between the Meade Memorial at Pennsylvania Avenue and Maryland Avenue, and a portrayal of green was suggested, it being expected that in due time a monument will be erected in Union Square along Maryland Avenue to balance the Meade Memorial. Mr. Parsons was especially desirous to know the height of the planting for Union Square, and he was asked by the Commission to have a special study of this in connection with a further detailed study for Union Square, for further consideration by the Commission of Fine Arts.

6. FREER GALLERY PLANTING PLAN: Under date of June 6 the following letter was received from Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3d, Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, submitting a planting plan with letter from Mr. John Lodge (Exhibit A), Curator of the Freer Gallery of Art:

> 'I inclose a letter from Mr. Lodge, Curator of the Freer Gallery of Art, relative to the planting of a hedge around the Freer Gallery. My own feeling is that any planting or fences on Government land which would seem to indicate a separation into lots of the land adjacent to public buildings along the Mall is undesirable and ought to be discouraged with the development of the Mall as a whole in accordance with present plans. It seems to me that, even if the public ground

it put on land belonging to the Government, the public should not be denied reasonable use of adjacent Government land and that the institution should not be permitted to segregate any part thereof as though it private property.

Of course, it is regrettable that the public use of this land should be objectionable to the managers of the Green Gallery, but I do feel that there is a great deal of weight in what I have just said and that this is one of the evils which must be borne by the beneficiaries of a public gift of land.

I should be very much obliged to your Commission for advice on Mr. Lodge's request."

Mr. Greenleaf emphasized the importance of having a unified scheme of planting for the Mall, and felt that the buildings along the Mall should be considered a part of it, which he felt would not result if any one institution located on the Mall having a planting plan differing from another. He said he would not have an institution spread itself like a village along the Mall, and called attention to the action of the Commission in recommending recently a building for the Museum of Engineering and Industry to be coordinated with the Mall plan of development.

Mr. Moore was of the opinion that so long as a building conformed architecturally and in the matter of its approaches to the Mall plan, the individuality of the institution might be asserted by such a planting plan as the institution might wish to accept. He called attention to the Smithsonian Park, which is enclosed by a fence, and felt that from some public center and grounds will be enclosed here. Mr. Lowe also called attention to the Folger plan or Mr. Platt to enlarge the Freer Gallery of Art. It was decided unnecessary to take no action with regard to this planting plan until Mr. Platt has been consulted in the matter.

7. MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION, Fiscal Year 1936: The secretary recommended the following dates for meetings of the Commission of Fine Arts for the fiscal

were tentatively approved by the Commission:

Thursday and Friday, September 8 and 9, 1938;

Friday, October 14;

Friday, November 18.

(By direction of the Chairman, the Commission of Fine Arts will meet Thursday, Friday and Saturday, September 15, 16, and 17, instead of September 8 and 9. On September 16th there is to be a joint meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission to decide finally on the Arlington Memorial Bridge approach at the Lincoln Memorial).

The Commission adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The Commission were the guests of Mr. Lorgie and Mr. Delano at luncheon at the Century Club.

COPY

Office of the Engineer
Freer Gallery of Art
Washington

June 1, 1917.

My dear Colonel Grant:

I may accept my thanks for your letter of May 17th.

I think there is much force in your statement that individual treatment of the grounds surrounding the various buildings on the Mall might well interfere with the harmonious effect of the Mall as a whole. On the other hand, it has seemed to Mr. Platt, the architect of the Freer Gallery, and to me that since the strips of land surrounding this building are indeed so narrow, they might be laid out in relation to the building itself so as to obviate the effect you naturally wish to avoid. In any case, I send you herewith a drawing which indicates the possibilities we have in mind. The green lines surrounding the lot represent a four foot privet hedge, the red lines a six foot wrought iron fence. These are alternative suggestions. Trees to be newly planted in connection with the hedge or the fence are indicated in green outline, the existing trees are indicated in black.

Let me add that my object in making these suggestions is not confined to the embellishment of the grounds; my primary desire, indeed, being to protect the building and those who work in it from injury to the one and annoyance to the others caused by the children who make a common playground of the whole premises and make destructive and unmitigated daily nuisances of themselves. This difficulty could, of course, be solved by adequate policing, but unless that can be provided, I should highly appreciate the necessary permission to accomplish the desired result by means of a protective hedge or fence such as I am suggesting.

Sincerely yours,

C. L. Lodge,

Surveyor.

Colonel U. S. Grant,

Office of Public Buildings and

Public Parks of the National Capitol,

Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A.